Export of Tobacco from Andhra Pradesh

*297. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Russia and other former USSR countries have stopped buying tobacco from Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, what are the reasons for decline in purchases of Andhra tobacco;

(c) whether any trade delegation has been sent to Russia and the former USSR States to promote Andhra tobacco; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) Issue of exports of tobacco to Russia was discussed during the fourth meeting of the Indo-Russian Working Group on Trade and Economic Cooperation in its meeting held in New Delhi on 11-12 December, 1997 wherein Russian side intimated that Association of Tobacco Manufacturers of Russia would be the nodal agency for imports of tobacco from India.

Embargo on Import of Shrimps.

*298. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the World Trade Organisation (WTO) has ruled the US embargo on import of shrimps from India on environmental grounds as untenable;

(b) if so, the extent of loss in exports of shrimps caused by such embargo, so far; and

(c) the steps taken and being taken to boost production and export of shrimps, involving not only big but also small produces as well?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) No, Sir. The Dispute Settlement Panel report in this regard has not yet been adopted by the Dispute Settlement Body of the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

(b) The US embargo on import of shrimps from India except the shrimps harvested by artisanal means or sourced from aquaculture, came into effect on 1.5.1996. The shrimp exports to USA during the last three years have been as follows:—

Year	Quantity (Metric Ton)	Value (Rs. Crore)
1995-96	16,556	290.12
1996-97	16,467	335.69
1997-98	19,723	467.71

(c) The following steps have been taken and are being taken to boost the production and export of shrimps:—

(i) Production of aquaculture shrimps is encouraged by Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) by extending subsidies for the development of new acquaculture farms and shrimp hatcheries.

(ii) With a view to increase production and control diseases, MPEDA extends necessary guidance and training to the aquaculture farmers on scientific methods for sustainable ecofriendly aquaculture.

(iii) MPEDA has procured Polymerase Chain Reaction machines and Dot Blot Diagnostic kits for testing so that only virus free mother brooders and seedlings are supplied to the shrimp hatcheries and aquaculture farms respectively.

(iv) Various schemes are being implemented through MPEDA for helping the fishery product processing units to produce quality fish and fishery products for exports namely schemes for establishment of captive peeling sheds, cold storages, mini laboratories,